

Council Report
Minister of Education
May 1, 2008

How in the world do you say “Thank you!” to over 154 dedicated volunteers—folks who faithfully show up each week for a variety of Christian education/formation activities for our children and youth here at COS? One of my mother’s favorite sayings, often spoken on the event of her birthday or Christmas, was, “It’s the thought that counts!” I think grand thoughts when I think about these people. On April 27 we will remember them in our intercessory prayer during worship, and we will eat cake in their honor during the fellowship time. They will find a special thank you note in their church mailboxes with a hand made gift inside. Their names (as many as we could possibly think of!) were in the bulletin. Perhaps there are name there that YOU are particularly drawn to; listen to that little voice that is encouraging YOU to add your gratitude to the chorus of thanks we are sending their way.

April is ending with a bang and May will be full of growth opportunities for our church family. In May, 2nd graders will join me for special times of transitioning to worship in the “big worship space” as they “graduate” from Children’s Worship. Two Sundays will be spent with me for special instruction, and on Saturday, May 17, they are invited to the worship workshop for further encouragement in this big step. May 18 they will be receiving a gift from their COS family: their very own copy of the NIV Adventure Bible. May 18 will be their first “official” Sunday to remain in worship for the entire time.

Also in May I’ll be wearing my many-sided recruiting hat. Recruiting at COS has become “a many splendored thing.” We need folks for Summer Sundays Enrichment at 8:30 and 11:00, and Fall 2008: Little Lambs, Children’s Worship, Church school, Girls Club, Cadets, KIDS HOPE USA, just to name a few.....Perhaps there is a program here that YOU are particularly drawn to; listen to that little voice that is encouraging YOU to join this host of saintly volunteers!

Keep your eyes peeled for the “Bringing the Worlds Together” summer activities that Janice, Judy, Naji and I have been working on together. (More on that in my next report.)

With a desire to take our COS Adult Education offerings to a new level, Brion Brooks and I have formed a committee which we consider an adult education visioning committee. Ron Rienstra, Bill Bostrom, and Jeanette Sprik have joined the two of us for two great conversations about how adult education meshes with faith formation, our need for multi track offerings and what those might look like, and a desire to offer a well-orchestrated plan to make this happen, not just for one year, but with an eye to a several year menu of offerings. I am confident that a great deal of “fruit” will come from the work of this group and hope to have more specifics to share in my next report—or you may read about this in Brion’s next report. Either way, expect something good!

On a personal note, I was blessed in attending two special events in the month of April: April 3-6, I was away on a silent retreat up in Conway, MI. and on April 17-19 I attended the Festival of Faith and Writing at Calvin College. The silent retreat was part of Phase One of the spiritual formation program I am now finishing at the Dominican Center here in town. (I'd say a third of the class is from the CRC!) Both the retreat and the festival were the kinds of events that aren't over when they're over. I am still "unpacking" insights and information received during both of them. What a privilege to work in a place where attending such things is both honored and encouraged!

As you travel this summer and find yourself worshipping in other places, if you see a good idea or hear one, please bring it back with you!

Serving in the Kingdom with you,

Jan De Vos
Minister of Education
Church of the Servant